



Press Release

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Pennsylvania Potato Crop Down 18 Percent in 2002

HARRISBURG – Total potato stocks stored in Pennsylvania on January 1, 2003 were 1,100,000 cwt., 21 percent less than a year ago according to the Pennsylvania Agricultural Statistics Service. The December 1, 2002 potato stocks for the Commonwealth were revised up to 1,400,000 cwt.

Stocks are defined as the quantity (whether sold or not) remaining in storage for all purposes and uses, including seed potatoes not yet moved, and shrinkage, waste, and other losses that occur after the date of each report. Sales of fall potatoes for all purposes for the past 5 years averaged 90.8 percent of the total fall production. Shrinkage, loss, and home use account for the remaining 9.2 percent.

Potato production for the Commonwealth in 2002, 2,590,000 cwt, was 18 percent lower than the 2001 crop. There were 14,000 acres of potatoes harvested in Pennsylvania this fall and the average yield per acre was estimated at 185 cwt., down 21 percent from the 2001 yield.

In the **U.S.**, the 15 major potato States held 232 million cwt of potatoes on January 1, 2003, up 3 percent from last year but 16 percent below 2001. Storage accounts for 56 percent of the 2002 fall storage State's production, down 2 percentage points from last year. Stocks by type are 3 percent red, 10 percent round white, 3 percent long white (Shepody), and 84 percent russet. There are more reds and fewer russets than a year ago. December 1, 2002 stocks were revised up slightly, with changes in California and Pennsylvania.

Disappearance, at 179 million cwt, from the start of harvest to January 1, is up 10 percent from the same period last year but 3 percent below two years ago. December disappearance was 33.8 million cwt, down 1 percent from a year ago and 4 percent below two years ago. Shrink and loss, at 18.4 million cwt, is up 6 percent from last year and 14 percent below two years ago.

Processors used 92.8 million cwt of 2002 crop potatoes so far this season, up 15 percent from a year ago but 3 percent below two years ago. December usage of 15.2 million cwt is 2 percent above last year but 10 percent below two years ago. Dehydrators used 19.7 million cwt to date.

Production of fall potatoes for 2002 is forecast at 417 million cwt, up less than 1 percent from November and 6 percent above last year. However, this is 11 percent smaller than the record high 2000 crop. Area harvested, at 1.11 million acres, is up 4 percent from last year but 7 percent below two years ago. The average yield is forecast at 374 cwt per acre, 3 cwt above last month and 7 cwt above last year. Production estimates are generally lower this year in Central and Eastern States but higher in the West. Harvest was completed on schedule in nearly all States.